



A *Special Anniversary for Idaho*

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Golden anniversaries are invariably special occasions. Successfully negotiating the twists and turns that accompany the passage of a half-century is a testament to vision, persistence, adaptability and innate quality. It is also cause for acknowledgement – whether for a marriage, a business or major world event.

The event that merits our collective attention this month occurred in New York, but the importance of Idaho's role in enabling the event and in carrying its spirit forward to today can't be overstated. On December 8, 1953, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, one of the most admired military and political leaders of the 20th century, literally had the eyes and ears of the world on him as he addressed more than 3,000 delegates in the United Nations General Assembly. He seized the moment to challenge the world to move beyond military use of the atom – toward Atoms for Peace.

In his landmark address, he established the official policy of the United States regarding atomic energy. President Eisenhower pledged that the United States from that day forward would devote its efforts to putting the “miraculous inventiveness of man” to work to free the atom from its military casing and “adapt it to the arts of peace.” He said experts would be mobilized to “apply atomic energy to the needs of agriculture, medicine and other peaceful activities. A special purpose would be to provide abundant electrical energy to the power-starved areas of the world.” President Eisenhower proclaimed, “The United States knows that peaceful power from atomic energy is no dream of the future. That capability, already proved, is here now – today.”

The president was able to offer this assurance of reality because of the ingenuity and accomplishments of scientists and engineers here in Idaho who had been hard at work on the goals of “Atoms for Peace” since 1949. The best and brightest minds from the University of Chicago and Argonne

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National Laboratory, from Clinton Laboratory in Tennessee and other proud institutions came to Idaho to prove the promise of nuclear power. On a cold night in December 1951, those nuclear visionaries produced usable amounts of electricity from nuclear energy for the first time anywhere in the world. Less than two years after President Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" address, these same Idaho pioneers powered an entire city – Arco, Idaho – with nuclear-generated electricity for the first time in U.S. history.

Throughout the history of the Idaho laboratory, these nuclear pioneers, and those who later joined them, maintained a matchless legacy of innovation and accomplishment. Here in Idaho, they designed and built 52 mostly first-of-their-kind nuclear reactors – establishing at one time, the largest concentration of reactors anywhere in the world. Building on this expertise, new materials were developed, the safety basis for the world's fleet of nuclear power reactors was established and new uses of the atom that President Eisenhower envisioned were demonstrated.

Idaho's "Atoms for Peace" research and development led to the production of radioisotopes that are used to assure the safety of industrial products and to diagnose and treat medical conditions. Cancer treatments were advanced through Idaho work in the field of neutron radiotherapy. Adaptation of nuclear technologies led to development of devices used to identify weapons of mass destruction, and even to clean up oil spills.

Idaho remains at the forefront of 21st century efforts to carry on President Eisenhower's Atoms for Peace initiative. We, at Idaho's national laboratory, have had our historic role as the nation's leading center of nuclear energy research and development reaffirmed by the U.S. Secretary of Energy. We have been assigned the role of leading U.S. efforts to develop the next generation of nuclear power systems – systems that are safer and more efficient than anything now in use, and also able to produce clean hydrogen.

The employees at Idaho's national laboratory are committed to performing this new national priority work safely, professionally and with great care for the protection of our environment. The December 8 anniversary of Atoms for Peace marks the beginning of a new era for nuclear energy, supplying clean, secure and affordable energy to support growing world energy demands – Atoms for Peace and Prosperity.